

BEFORE THE ARIZONA BOARD OF
OSTEOPATHIC EXAMINERS IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY

IN THE MATTER OF:

BASEM MERI, D.O.

Holder of License No. 3370 for the
practice of osteopathic medicine in the
State of Arizona.

STIPULATION AND CONSENT
ORDER OF SUSPENSION OF LICENSE

STIPULATION

By mutual agreement and understanding, the Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners (hereafter "Board") and Basem Meri, D.O. (hereinafter "Respondent"), the parties hereto agree to the following disposition to this matter.

1. Respondent acknowledges that he has read this Stipulation and the attached Consent Order; and, Respondent is aware of and understands the content of these documents.
2. Respondent understands that by entering into this Stipulation, he voluntarily relinquishes any rights to a hearing on the matters alleged as grounds for Board action or to seek judicial review of the consent order in state or federal court.
3. Respondent understands that this Stipulation and Consent Order will not become effective unless approved by the Board and signed by its Executive Director.
4. Respondent further understands that this Stipulation and Consent Order, once approved and signed, shall constitute a public records which will be disseminated as a formal action of the Board as required by A.R.S. §§ 32-1855 (L) and (K).
5. Respondent admits to the statement of facts and conclusions of law contained in the Stipulated Consent Order.

6. All admissions made by Respondent are solely for final disposition of this matter and any subsequent administrative proceedings or litigation involving the Board, Respondent and the State of Arizona; and, therefore, said admissions by Respondent are not intended for any other purpose or administrative regulatory proceeding or litigation in another state or federal court

7. Respondent acknowledges and agrees that upon signing and returning this document (or a copy thereof) to the Board's Executive Director, he may not later revoke or amend this Stipulation or any part of the Consent Order, although said Stipulation has not yet been accepted by the Board and issued by its Executive Director, without first obtaining Board approval.

REVIEWED AND ACCEPTED this _____ day of August, 2000.

Basem Meri
Basem Meri D.O.
Basem Meri, D.O.

Oregon
STATE OF ARIZONA)
Yavapai) ss
County of Maricopa)

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 11 day of August, 2000 by the above-named individual.

Leanne M. Grow
Notary Public

My Commission expires:

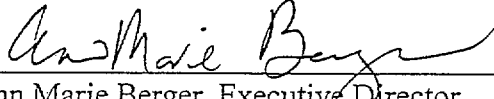
12/7/2003



REVIEWED AND APPROVED as to form by counsel for Respondent on this ____ day of
August, 2000.

Counsel for Respondent

REVIEWED AND SIGNED this 22nd day of August, 2000 for the Board by:



Ann Marie Berger, Executive Director
Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine
and Surgery

BEFORE THE ARIZONA BOARD OF
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IN THE MATTER OF:

BASEM MERI, D.O.
Holder of License No. 3370 for the
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)
)
) FINDINGS OF FACT,
) CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
) AND CONSENT ORDER FOR
) SUSPENSION OF LICENSE
)

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Basem Meri, D.O., (hereafter "Respondent"), is a licensee of the Board and the holder of License No. 3370.

2. On August 22, 1998, during its public meeting, the Board reviewed Respondent's application for license during a public Board Meeting concerning Respondent's medical history and prior addiction to a controlled substance and all other relevant issues concerning his qualification to obtain a Board license. On August 22, 1998, the Board authorized preparation of an Order granting Respondent a license to practice as an osteopathic physician in the State of Arizona; and, said license was placed on probation and subject to specific requirements including, but not limited to, mandatory participation in random urine drug screens, attendance at required Board Impaired Physician committee meetings and complete abstinence from alcohol and non-prescribed medications or illicit drugs.

3. On February 15, 2000 Respondent tested positive for Propoxyphene-N. Respondent informed the Board's Staff that he had been treated at Yuma Regional Hospital and that he forgot to put the medication on his required medication log.

4. On or about February 23, 2000, Respondent attended the Impaired Physician Meeting

and informed the Board Staff that he had changed treating physicians and was now being treated by Guerrero Zonis, M.D. Respondent informed the Board Staff that Dr. Zonis was prescribing him Celebrex, Elavil and Lortab. Upon questioning, Respondent informed Board Staff that he had provided a copy of his Board Order to Dr. Zonis.

5. On or about April 5, 2000, Respondent, upon questioning by Board Staff, asked whether or not he had informed Dr. Zonis of his Probationary Order. Respondent stated that he had informed Dr. Zonis that he was under probation for substance abuse.

6. On or about May 17, 2000, Respondent appeared at the Impaired Physician Meeting and once again informed Board Staff that he had informed Dr. Zonis of his probationary order.

7. On or about May 30, 2000, Respondent failed to appear for a required urine drug screen.

8. On or about June 5, 2000, Board Staff telephoned Dr. Zonis to confirm that he was aware of Respondent's probationary status and substance abuse problems. Dr. Zonis stated that Respondent had not informed him of that and, had he known, he would have treated Respondent differently.

9. In public session on June 10, 2000, Respondent admitted that he had not informed his treating physician of his probationary status. Respondent also admitted to taking samples of Ultram from his office for personal use.

10. In public session, the Board voted on June 10, 2000 that Respondent was medically and/or psychologically unable to engage in the practice of medicine and was an immediate threat to the health, safety and welfare of the public.

11. Respondent requested that he enter into a Stipulated Consent Order for assessment and in-patient treatment and having completed such treatment be placed under terms of Probation for a five-year period to include rehabilitation, practice restriction and monitoring. In public session, the Board voted on August 19, 2000 that Respondent was medically and/or psychologically unable to engage in the practice of medicine and authorized the Board's Executive Director to sign and issue a Stipulated Consent Order regarding Respondent that follows hereinafter.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes § 32-1800, et seq., the Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery has subject matter and personal jurisdiction in this matter.

2. The Board has the authority to enter into a stipulated order for disciplinary action against a licensee, pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1061(D), A.R.S. § 32-1855 and A.R.S. § 32-1861(D).

3. The Respondent engaged in unprofessional conduct as defined in A.R.S. § 32-1854 by violating federal and state statutes and regulations:

(4) Being diagnosed by a physician licensed under this chapter or chapter 13 of this title or a psychologist licensed under chapter 19.1 of this title as excessively or illegally using alcohol or a controlled substance.

(26) Violating a formal order, probation or a stipulation issued by the Board under this chapter.

(40) Any conduct or practice that endangers a patient's or the public's health or may reasonably be expected to do so.

(41) Any conduct or practice that impairs the licensee's ability to safely and skillfully practice medicine or that may reasonably be expected to do so.

4. Based upon the Findings of Fact set forth above herein, the Board concludes that it

has the requisite factual basis and legal authority to order temporary suspension of Respondent's license.

ORDER

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Board, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

1. Basem Meri, D.O. ("Respondent"), Board license 3370 shall remain **SUSPENDED** from the practice of osteopathic medicine and surgery until he has complied with the following terms and conditions of this agreement:

- a. Respondent will successfully complete the in-patient evaluation for possible alcohol or chemical dependency at Springbrook Northwest in Newberg, Oregon (hereinafter "Springbrook"). Should Springbrook find an assessment of chemical or alcohol dependency, Respondent will follow the recommendations for treatment.
- b. Respondent will develop a plan for aftercare treatment and monitoring which shall include, but may not be limited to, individual and/or group counseling sessions, random body fluid testing, agreement for release of treatment records and reports to the Board, prohibition of the use of alcohol and controlled substances unless the latter is prescribed or coordinated by his treating physician, and regular meeting with the Board, and submit this plan to the Board for its approval.

2. Respondent will sign a release authorizing personnel at Springbrook to inform the Board of his progress as to his in-patient evaluation and any in-patient treatment program and will provide the Board with a copy of any and all records pertinent to his diagnosis and treatment while a patient at said facility and upon discharge.

3. Upon written request by the Respondent, Respondent will meet with the Board upon reasonable notice after discharge from Springbrook to discuss his compliance with this agreement and to discuss whether or not he should resume the practice of osteopathic medicine and the terms and conditions under which he will be allowed by the Board to resume the practice of osteopathic medicine and surgery in the State of Arizona.

4. If Respondent is allowed to resume the practice of medicine. Respondent's Board License Number 3370 will be placed under PROBATION for five (5) years and he shall comply with the terms and conditions of probation as set forth herein:

5. From the date of this Order, Respondent shall obtain psychiatric or psychological treatment by a therapist(s) who is either a licensed psychiatrist and/or psychologist and is selected by Respondent and approved by the Board. Respondent shall comply with the therapist recommendation for the frequency of therapy treatment sessions. Respondent shall inform the Board by letter (mailed within ten days of the date of this Order) of the therapist's name; and, Respondent shall undertake and fully cooperate with a program of treatment established by the therapist. In the event Respondent changes therapists, he shall give the Board written notice within ten (10) days of said action. Respondent shall not discontinue or reduce the frequency of psychotherapy sessions until he has submitted a written request to the Board and obtained Board approval.

6. Respondent's therapist(s) shall receive a copy of this Order and Board Staff shall cooperate with and disclose all relevant information in the Board's files concerning Respondent. The treating therapist shall be directed by Respondent to send to the Board a detailed written progress report every month for the remainder of the probation; and Respondent, shall waive any confidentiality concerning his psychotherapy in order that the Board may receive full disclosure of information. The expense of the aforementioned therapy and the reports to the Board by Respondent's therapist shall be the sole responsibility of the Respondent.

7. Respondent shall provide a copy of this Order and any subsequent Orders to all facilities where Respondent is currently (or subsequently) employed as a physician and/or has (or subsequently receives) privileges to engage in the practice of medicine. Respondent shall provide

a copy of this Order to all treating physicians and dentists. Respondent shall continue to make the aforementioned disclosure and provide copies of this Consent Order until the expiration of this Order.

8. Respondent may have his license to practice as an osteopathic physician restricted, suspended or revoked by the Board in the future if:

- (A) The Board finds that Respondent does not have the requisite mental, physical and emotional fitness to safely continue the practice of medicine; or,
- (B) There are new grounds for finding unprofessional conduct concerning Respondent; or,
- (C) Fails to comply fully with the terms and conditions of this Order.

9. Respondent shall abstain completely from the consumption of alcoholic beverages or any substance with alcohol (i.e. cough syrups); and, Respondent shall not consume illicit drugs or take any controlled substances (i.e., prescription only drugs), unless such medication is prescribed for him by his treating physician. Respondent shall maintain a monthly log (for the duration of probation) of all prescription only drugs taken by him and such log shall include the following information:

- (a) the name of the medication;
- (b) name of prescribing physician;
- (c) reason for the medication.

At the first of each month, Respondent shall report by letter to the Board whether or not he is taking any prescription only medication and, if so, a copy of his log reflecting the above information.

10. Respondent shall also, as part of his probation: (A) submit to and cooperate in any

independent medical or psychological evaluation that is ordered by the Board for Respondent and conducted by the Board's designated physician and/or psychologist which shall be paid for by Respondent; and (B) appear before the Board, upon receipt of a request by written or telephonic notification from the Board's executive director which shall be given at least five (5) days prior to the Board meeting; and, (C) submit to random biological fluid testing and promptly provide (i.e., within sixty (60) minutes of notification) required biological fluids for testing and said testing shall be done at the Respondent's expense.

11. Respondent shall participate in a minimum of three (3) self-help meetings per week through such organizations as A.A., N.A., C.A. and doctor's Caduceus group. Respondent shall keep a log of all meetings attended and have the log signed by the chairperson of the meeting. Respondent will provide the Board with a copy of the signed log the first of every month.

12. In the event Respondent moves and ceases to practice medicine in Arizona, he shall give written notice to the Board of his new residence address within twenty (20) days of moving; and, the terms and duration of probation may be stayed by the Board until Respondent returns to practice medicine in Arizona.

13. Respondent shall reimburse the Board for all expenses associated with the investigation, hearing and continued monitoring of this matter.

14. Respondent shall continue to meet all licensing requirements such as continuing medical education and renewal requirements including applicable fees pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1825.

15. The Board's Executive Director shall send correspondence to the appropriate state and/or federal law enforcement agency disclosing information in the Board's possession which may establish criminal misconduct by Respondent, i.e., illicit use of controlled substances.

16. Respondent's failure to comply with the requirements of this Order shall constitute unprofessional conduct as defined at A.R.S. § 32-1854(26), as amended, and may be considered as grounds for further disciplinary action (e.g., suspension or revocation of license) in the event that Respondent fails to comply with any of the requirements of this Order.

ISSUED this 22nd day of August, 2000.

ARIZONA BOARD OF OSTEOPATHIC EXAMINERS
IN MEDICINE AND SURGERY

By: Ann Marie Berger
Ann Marie Berger, Executive Director

Served by personal service or
sending U.S. certified mail
this 24th day of August, 2000 to:

Basem Meri, D.O.
10398 Cony Ave.
Yuma AZ 85367

Copy mailed this 24th day of August, 2000 to:

Blair Driggs
Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
1275 W. Washington
Phoenix AZ 85007 (w/enclosure)

Arizona Board of Pharmacy
5060 N. 19th Ave., Suite 101
Phoenix AZ 85015

Drug Enforcement Administration
Attention: Diversion Section
3010 N. 2nd St
Phoenix AZ 85012